

Amendments to the Claims

The "Listing of Claims" replaces all pending claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-5. (Cancelled).

6. (Currently amended) An additive composition for thermoplastic polymer materials, comprising granules consisting ~~essentially~~ of a component selected from the group consisting of ~~a calcium soap, a zinc soap and mixtures thereof~~ antistatic agents, antifogging agents, UV stabilizers, coupling agents, calendering aids, mold release agents, lubricants, release agents, slip agents, plasticizers, perfumes, fillers, and heat stabilizers, wherein the granules are extruded and the ends thereof are rounded to form substantially spherical granules ~~and have~~ having a diameter of from 0.5 to 5 mm.

7. (Cancelled).

8. (Previously Presented) The composition according to claim 6, wherein the granules have a diameter of from 0.8 to 3 mm.

9. (Previously Presented) The composition according to claim 6, wherein the granules have a uniform size and shape.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Previously Presented) The composition according to claim 6, wherein the granules have a length-to-diameter ratio of 1:1.

12-14. (Cancelled).

15. (Currently amended) A granular composition for thermoplastic polymer materials prepared by a process comprising the steps of:

(a) providing extruded cylindrical granules of a composition consisting ~~essentially~~ of a component selected from the group consisting of ~~a calcium soap, a zinc soap and mixtures thereof~~ antistatic agents, antifogging agents, UV stabilizers, coupling agents, calendering aids, mold release agents, lubricants, release agents, slip agents, plasticizers, perfumes, fillers, and heat stabilizers; and

(b) spheronizing the extruded cylindrical granules wherein the ends thereof are rounded to form substantially spherical granules having a diameter of from 0.5 to 5 mm.

16. (Currently Amended) The granular composition according to claim 15, wherein the step of providing extruded cylindrical granules comprises: (i): extruding a composition containing the component into a fine strand; and (ii): cutting the fine strand into cylindrical granules.

17. (Previously Presented) The granular composition according to claim 16, wherein the composition is extruded using a twin-screw extruder.

18. (Previously Presented) The granular composition according to claim 17, wherein the composition is extruded at a temperature of from 20 to 110°C and a pressure of from 25 to 60 bar.

19. (Previously Presented) The granular composition according to claim 15, wherein spheronizing is accomplished using a spheronizer having a rotating bottom disk.

20. (Previously Presented) The granular composition according to claim 19, wherein spheronizing is performed at a rotational speed of 320 rpm with a residence time of 30 seconds.

21-23. (Cancelled).

24. (Currently Amended) The granular composition according to claim 18, wherein spheronizing is carried out using a spheronizer having a rotating bottom disk operating at a rotational speed of 320 rpm with a residence time of 30 seconds; ~~and the process further comprises impregnating the granules with an additional active substance.~~

25. (Currently amended) A method for ~~stabilizing~~ incorporating additives into a thermoplastic polymer composition ~~during processing, said method comprising:~~

(a) providing a thermoplastic polymer composition;

(b) providing ~~a granular composition comprising~~ granules consisting essentially of a component selected from the group consisting of ~~a calcium soap, a zinc soap and mixtures thereof~~ antistatic agents, antifogging agents, UV stabilizers, coupling agents, calendering aids, mold release agents, lubricants, release agents, slip agents, plasticizers, perfumes, fillers, and heat stabilizers, wherein the granules are extruded and the ends thereof are rounded to form substantially spherical granules having and have a diameter of from 0.5 to 5 mm;

(c) combining the thermoplastic polymer composition and the granular ~~composition~~ substantially spherical granules prior to processing completion.

26. (Previously Presented) The additive composition according to Claim 1, incorporated into a polyvinylchloride polymer.

27. (Previously Presented) The granular composition according to Claim 15, incorporated into a polyvinylchloride polymer.

28. (Previously Presented) The additive composition according to Claim 25, wherein the thermoplastic polymer composition comprises polyvinylchloride.

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29. (New) The composition according to Claim 6, wherein the heat stabilizers are selected from the group consisting of a calcium soap, a zinc soap and mixtures thereof.

30. (New) The composition according to Claim 15, wherein the heat stabilizers are selected from the group consisting of a calcium soap, a zinc soap and mixtures thereof.

31. (New) The method according to Claim 25, wherein the heat stabilizers are selected from the group consisting of a calcium soap, a zinc soap and mixtures thereof.